



**DECEMBER 2021**

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our Foodbank community a very peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.



## Newsletter

### A FEW WORDS FROM OUR DEPUTY MANAGER, FELICITY PARRY:

### A WORD FROM OUR MANAGER, SUE WEIGHTMAN:

This year has certainly been a year of changes both for our volunteers and in the way we serve clients who need us. We have seen some volunteers leave us who have worked here for a long time and also had the pleasure of welcoming new ones. It has also seen the Foodbank supporting other charities with our knowledge and encouragement and being able to become a voice on food forum platforms and with those organisations that are planning future support for those who find themselves in need.

It has been a privilege to lead the team in all their hard work, to see the kindness they show each person that comes to the Foodbank, the warehouse team who work every morning, often in the cold, and prepare the boxes of food with such consistency. For all of them it has been a difficult year, yet with a small bribery of homemade cake, they joyfully work hard.

Could I take this opportunity to thank you, if you are reading this newsletter then you will have also played a part in keeping the Foodbank going this year.

We could not do this without you.



Having been involved with the setting up and continuing to run the Wiveliscombe satellite of the Taunton Foodbank, since mid-April every Wednesday to Friday I am in the Foodbank in Taunton supporting Sue and carrying out numerous roles. Every day is different! In the beginning we were still operating under "Covid" rules with the distribution room closed, clients being seen over a table at the front door and warehouse and packing teams operating on different days. Since October we have seen the Distribution room open up again with a new team of volunteers returning to help.

The job is certainly very varied, and I have had to learn that what I think I am coming in to achieve each morning may not actually happen. Having been the Lead Volunteer in Wiveliscombe for 4 years I had a good grounding on how the Foodbank was run and this experience has certainly been invaluable. I had been considering looking for a part-time job when Sue approached me and working with people who are passionate about the same thing, I feel that it is a privilege to support both Sue and all the volunteers in Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe.



We have been recipients of much generosity from our community, particularly over the Harvest Festival which raised over **5 tonnes** of food. You are too many to single out, but our heartfelt thanks

to all of you for keeping us afloat – you know who you are!



Branston came on board in August with their offer of potatoes and so far, they have fed **758** people.

## MUNNA & NICOLA MITRA: VIEW FROM A VAN

Nicola and I retired from ministry at the end of May 2021 and moved from Gillingham in Kent to Taunton, in order to be closer to most of our relatives. We were actively looking for volunteer work and were very kindly welcomed into a surprisingly large community of local Foodbank volunteers. It was reassuring to see just how many people had similar ideas of voluntary service to our own. For our previous forty-five working years we would simply not have had the time to contribute in this way. It was a pleasure and a privilege for us that the staff at the Foodbank so readily took us on board and set us to work within weeks of our migration to Taunton.

It was not difficult to learn to drive the little Peugeot van that is used daily for collection runs to the supermarkets and we swiftly honed our techniques for doing the Friday morning round and efficiently stacking the van with the generous donations of shoppers at Marks and Spencer's, Sainsbury's and Tesco's. At first, we felt the odd twinge from muscles long unused to lifting and sorting crates of tins and packets for a couple of hours, but gradually over the weeks we have become more physically resilient and are of course ultra-careful to lift and load in ways that are safe for our elderly frames. I suspect that we are actually fitter than when we began this task four months ago, an unexpected bonus. We are happy to have found this activity to engage us for at least one morning per week. Nicola and I enjoy our Friday morning outings to the three supermarkets which we visit. We find the people whom we meet on those weekly trips are appreciative and generous and we are grateful that there are other people like us who freely give their labour to ensure that at least some of the families which are needy in Taunton can receive some help from the Foodbank to feed their children and affirm their dignity as our fellow citizens.



## JustGiving™

We set up a Just Giving page in July to make it easier for people to donate and raise money for us and as a charity we are not charged.

<https://www.justgiving.com/tauntonfoodbank>

Well done and thank you!



One of our amazing volunteers, John Carpenter, and his wife Carol, ran 2 half marathons and raised a staggering £1163.92 to stock the shelves with 624 kilograms worth of food for the foodbank.

## IN OTHER NEWS



The biggest difference made to the running of the Foodbank was the donation of a van by Howards Motor Group to assist with collections from supermarkets and deliveries to our satellite points in Wellington and Wiveliscombe. This has also allowed us more flexibility in delivering to clients who are absolutely unable to come to us.

